



# AETC Bases News Clips

## Altus AFB, OK



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### **If BRAC considers economic impact, AFB fares well**

*By Dana Attocknie, asst. managing editor*

When the criteria for keeping or closing bases is released later this year in preparation for the 2005 round of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, local officials will quickly scan the list to see if economic impact will count. If it does -- as it has in all previous BRAC rounds -- they may breathe a sigh of relief, because Altus and Jackson County rely on its military installation in a way few military communities do.

The local economic impact has been a constant criterion in previous rounds of Base Realignment and Closure, however its consideration for the 2005 round has yet to be decided.

With only the guidelines from the previous four rounds of base closures, local citizens can only speculate on what the economic effects would be if Altus Air Force Base does fly away.

"I think the ripple effect of that base closing would be horrible at best," said Bill Wilson, chairman of Altus military affairs committee.

In accordance with a BRAC 2005 timeline established by the Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization Act, draft selection criteria will be published no later than Dec. 31, 2003. Once the proposed criteria is published in the Federal Register and submitted to congressional defense committees, there will be an opportunity for public comment for at least 30 days.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will then submit the final selection criteria no later than Feb. 16, 2004. The criteria will then dictate actions in military communities such as Altus.

"If you consider that you would loose over 5,000 jobs at the Air Force base, every business in the community would be impacted, and there would be more jobs lost from that," Wilson said.

As of fiscal year 2002, the economic impact analysis prepared by the 97th Comptroller Flight, Financial Analysis Branch, estimates the total economic impact to be \$225,989,946. from the base to the local community.

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The same analysis reports the total personnel on base to be 4,615; listing 2,137 as military, and 2,478 as civilian. The annual payroll from the personnel totals \$134,862,824.

Yet, the base in Altus also creates approximately 1,616 indirect jobs, according to the same analysis. In return, those indirect jobs had a value of \$45,280,320 during the last fiscal year.

"If it would close that would immediately give us about 39 percent unemployment," Wilson said. "You have 5,000 jobs at Altus AFB, of which only 2,400 or something are military; the others are civil service. All those people would go, because they're all mechanics and flight crew trainers ... they'd all go someplace else where they could stay with the civil service."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Jackson County had a total labor force of 13,007 in 2001. Of those people, 12,641 were employed, and 366 were unemployed, thus yielding an unemployment rate of 2.8 percent that year.

The Altus Chamber of Commerce lists the total base population at 7,338 which includes 2,192 military, 2,654 dependents and 2,492 civilians. This total does not include military retirees, 1,174 of whom are estimated to live here.

"They've got a payroll of \$135 million dollars a year, and all that money is spent here," Wilson said. "That's not money that they spend someplace else; that's payroll. So people buy houses, they spend money at the businesses, they buy utilities from the city ... those are huge, huge numbers. It would have a pretty serious impact."

Although, the consequence of a base closure lingers in the community, some business owners remain optimistic, and have not sensed any negative reactions to the possibility of a closure thus far.

"I personally have not felt it," said Arvella Wall, of Wall Real Estate. "In investors it has shown no negative response; they feel certain it's (base) going to stay, and I do too."

Wall said everybody she's been working with has been very supportive of the community's outlook.

Jackson County and the City of Altus each have a population of 28,439 and 21,447 respectively. According to the chamber, the population in Altus without people from the base and retirees is 12,935.

"We do all of the obstetrics for the base; we have 150 live births a year that come from Altus Air Force Base," said Wilson, who is also president/chief executive officer of Jackson County

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Memorial Hospital. "We pretty much know what areas of our operation would be most acutely impacted if that left. So there is no question that we're pretty aware ... and it probably will have as much or more impact on us as anybody. That's one of the reasons that I'm personally and probably more involved."

Data collected and analyzed for the Chamber not only came from the base, but also from sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Commerce and the University of Oklahoma, Center for Economic and Management Research.

The information compiled shows the closing of the base would cause a loss of employment of 4,254 direct jobs, which associates would lead to a \$129,546,395 annual payroll loss. Retail spending would be reduced by around \$45,341,238, leaving the local sales tax revenue to decline by approximately \$1,360,237, or 73.2 percent, annually.

Although, the selection criteria, for the 2005 round of BRAC has not been released, Wilson said it's important to look down the road, and for the community to consider the worse-case scenario.

"Our main effort is to do whatever we can to make sure the base doesn't close," Wilson said "But, I think we still have to be cognitive of the fact that if it does close, we still have to do something to replace that piece of the economy."



# AETC Bases News Clips

## LUKE AFB, AZ



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## Luke Air Force Base continues efforts to maintain its mission

### Air Base, Surprise, Wittmann all eyeing space

By Marianne Sikler

Plans for a joint land use study were unveiled by representatives of the Arizona Department of Commerce, and a Parsons Company consulting team, at a public information meeting held last week at the Ashton Ranch Elementary School in Surprise. The study will be funded through a grant by the federal Department of Defense, and its purpose is to coordinate the efforts of developing communities and the State to establish a land use policy to protect military bases from en-

croachment that would hinder their activities.

At stake is the potential loss of the Luke and Davis-Monthan Bases, the Barry Goldwater Range, and the top priority of maintaining the cornerstone of Luke's activities, its local Auxiliary 1 training field.

Luke officials in attendance spoke of the rich history of the base, and gave an update on how development is now threatening its activities. As a result of the mandate by President Franklin Roosevelt, Luke first was established in 1941 as Litchfield Park Air Base. It was renamed three months later as Luke Field after Phoenix native Lt. Frank Luke Jr., a World War I ace and the first aviator to receive the Medal of Honor.

The base was closed in 1946 after World War II, but reopened in 1951 during the Korean con-

flict. By 1991, Luke was designated as the nation's primary F-16 training base. It's the largest and only active-duty F-16 training base in the world, and graduates over 1,000 pilots annually.

The Auxiliary 1 training field (AUX 1), is an essential part of the base training program. AUX 1 is located 15 miles north of Luke and used for precision instrument landing procedures training. The training flight corridor stretches between the Gladden and Bagdad (Ariz.) airspace West toward the California border in a circular pattern back to base at altitudes descending from around 1,000 feet to 300 feet or lower as planes reach the AUX 1 field for a training series of three instrument landing approaches before returning and landing at

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## LUKE AFB, AZ



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### **LUKE AFB: continues efforts,** *from Page 1*

the Luke Base.

Luke officials are talking about future phase-out of the F-16's, to be replaced by the developing F-35 joint strike force fighter. Although the F-35 has more versatility in vertical take-off and landing capabilities, it will require much the same kind of flight training program as the F-16's, and development now is being seen directly below the designated flight corridor.

In Washington, Senators McCain and Kyle have been influential in starting discussions on bills that would provide \$14.3 million for land acquisition near Luke Air Force Base, in an effort to keep Luke off the closure list. The money would be used to keep land cleared around the base as a buffer area. Last year, \$13 million was approved to buy land where a munitions storage area is located. The additional \$14.7 million would go toward buying land in Luke's Southern departure corridor to the Barry M. Goldwater Range for flights with live arms.

The Northern corridor was shut down to live-arms flights because of increased development in El Mirage and Surprise.

Following the Luke presentation and study announcement, the City of Surprise held a Planning and Zoning public meeting to discuss a General Plan amendment as part of an annexation program designed to protect Luke from residential encroachment.

The amendment is planned to buffer Luke's flight corridor by dedicating land to employment uses and sparse residential development. The area in question is in the far Northwestern area of Surprise near Wittmann and the AUX 1 field. It covers 6,860 acres surrounding the field and has the potential for development of 22,000 homes. The Surprise General Plan amendment would zone for more compatible uses immediately surrounding the base, and transfer residential density to the outer perimeter of the planning area. The amendment is expected to be presented for review of the Surprise City Council at its Dec. 11 meeting.

Many Wittmann residents were at the meeting to protest the annexation. Wittmann resident Eliz-

abeth Alton displayed 645 petition signatures that had been garnered in Morristown and Wittmann against annexation, and said more would be forthcoming.

Several residents spoke one after another about Surprise infringing on their rights as property owners and gave the same reasons for not wanting to be annexed: they want to maintain their rural lifestyle, they moved away from crowded cities because of traffic and congestion for more open space and less crime, they own horses, have septic tanks and wells and prefer it that way, and don't want or need city amenities, rules, or taxes.

One resident protested that residential density would drain away his water and dry up his well, and questioned where Surprise would get the water to supply 22,000 residences.

Scott Phillips, planning manager for the City of Surprise, answered that the city intends to use ground water, but has a CAP water allocation of 7,600 acre feet and plans to use treated effluent to replenish its needs. Phillips projects more water will be put into the ground than will be taken out.

Wittmann residents are not alone in protesting increased growth that infringes on their lifestyle.

A group of Peoria residents has formed a community organization to stop development of a large planned commercial development near Lake Pleasant. The controversial 87-acre development has inspired neighbors to defend the rural lifestyle of the area, and activated a group called "Peoria Citizens for Responsible Government," which has begun a grassroots campaign to activate neighbors in opposition to the project.

"Most of us live here because it's a quiet, peaceful place in the desert, away from the traffic, congestion and hassle of the city," said Bryan Turner, a resident of the area. "Now, because some developer wants to build here, Peoria City Hall is ready to take away the rural character of our neighborhood. We won't let that happen without a fight."

**NorthWest Valley View**

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